

PATENT
Atty Docket No. 10014834-1

REMARKS

A final Office Action dated January 7, 2004 allows claims 4-8 and 16-20, and rejects claims 9, 10, 13-15 and 21-31. Applicants seek to cancel claims 21-30, and amend claims 9, 10, 13, 15 and 31 herein. Applicants maintain that the forgoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance, and therefore respectfully request that these amendments be entered and the case passed to issuance.

Allowed Claims

Regarding allowed claims 4-8 and 16-20, applicants agree with the Examiner's conclusions regarding patentability, without necessarily agreeing with or acquiescing to the Examiner's reasoning. In particular, applicants believe that these claims are allowable because the prior art fails to teach, anticipate or render obvious the invention as claimed, independent of how the invention is paraphrased.

Allowable Claims

Claims 9 and 10 have been amended to now depend on allowed claim 4. Accordingly, they too should now be in condition for allowance.

Similarly, claim 15 has been amended to include all the limitations of allowed claim 4, and therefore claim 15 should now be in condition for allowance.

Finally, since dependent claims 13, 14, and 31 depend on now allowable claim 15, they too should now be in condition for allowance.

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In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that all of the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that this amendment be entered and the case passed to issuance. If the Examiner has any questions, he is invited to contact applicants' attorney at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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